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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT Janet Speck, Gary Clements and Don
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STATE PLEASE PASS TO AIT/W Ruzicka
USDA/FAS for OCRA/Higgiston, Radler, Beillard, and Petlock; and
OCBD/Groves

Sensitive

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [APEC](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: Global Action on Food Security: Securing
Greater Support for Food Security at the L'Aquila
Summit

REF: SECSTATE 58996

1. (SBU) Summary: On June 15, AIT economic and agricultural officers shared reftel information with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Department of Economic and Trade Affairs Director General Weber Shih and Council of Agriculture (COA) International Affairs Department (IAD) Director General Susan Chang. Both Shih and Chang expressed appreciation for the information about the U.S. initiative, and gave AIT officers information on Taiwan's food security and other aid initiatives. COA's Chang requested a more detailed breakdown on U.S. food security spending. End summary.

MOFA: Food Security Key

2. (SBU) On June 15, AIT Economics Chief shared the information in reftel with MOFA Department of Economic and Trade Affairs DG Weber Shih. Shih said the Taiwan authorities have just released a white paper on foreign aid policy, and noted food security plays a large part in Taiwan's development policy. Shih cited an ongoing grain-yield enhancement project Taiwan is conducting with diplomatic allies Gambia, Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Nicaragua, and Haiti. [Note: an English summary of the 7 May white paper on foreign aid policy, "Progressive Partnerships and Sustainable Development, is on the MOFA website at <http://www.mofa.gov.tw>. End note.]

3. (SBU) Shih said Taiwan will increase coordination with donor countries as it develops and executes aid projects. According to Shih, in addition to its membership in the Asian Development Bank (ABD), Taiwan is seeking ways to increase cooperation with regional institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). [Note: on May 15, the MOFA-sponsored Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund signed a memorandum of understanding with the EBRD to provide USD 10 million to co-finance EBRD projects. End note.]

4. (SBU) Shih noted Taiwan would also like to work more with the African Development Bank (AfDB), but said the AfDB has not responded to Taiwan's offers. Shih also expressed hope Taiwan's overseas representative offices in countries such as Swaziland can directly cooperate on development issues with USAID offices in those countries.

COA: Taiwan Proposes to Sponsor APEC Food Security Forum

5. (SBU) On June 15, AGR Chief delivered the information in reftel to Taiwan Council of Agriculture (COA) International Affairs Department (IAD) Director-General Susan Chang.

¶6. (SBU) Chang expressed appreciation for the information about the U.S. initiative, and noted Taiwan's abiding interest and concern about food security issues, particularly given the island's dependence on feedstuff imports for livestock production. She noted that Taiwan was greatly hurt by higher feed and other input costs during the recent energy and food crisis.

¶7. (SBU) Chang informed Agoff Taiwan plans to propose the APEC Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group (ATCWG) fund a project titled "APEC Food Security Forum: a regional dialogue with global significance." If APEC accepts the proposal, Taiwan would host, in October 2010, a "Forum on Food Security" to be partially funded by APEC.

¶8. (SBU) Major issues to be discussed at the Forum would include the causes and implications of the food crisis, and potential policy responses to issues such as increased demand for agricultural commodities, low grain stock levels, market access for small farmers and food availability, food security mechanisms, agricultural investment and capacity building, drought and water scarcity, climate change, and food security-related research and development in second generation biofuels and agri-biotechnologies.

¶9. (SBU) Chang requested non-monetary U.S. co-sponsorship for the Taiwan proposal, and hopes to secure this at the upcoming ATCWG meeting in Suzhou, China that a number of COA staff will attend. In response, AGR Chief agreed to relay the Taiwan proposal to USDA/FAS, while noting there may not be enough time to get a Washington response before the meeting. [Note: AGR Chief subsequently emailed a copy of the Taiwan APEC/ATCWG proposal to APEC contact points in USDA/FAS, who have in turn distributed it to relevant Washington agencies, including staff who will be attending the ATCWG meeting. End Note.]

¶10. (SBU) Chang asked for a more detailed breakout on how the increased U.S. funding commitment will be spent. She also requested a historical comparison to past spending, both for the U.S. commitment and the global USD 15-billion target. While she did not present specific historical data nor speculate on future support, Chang indicated that Taiwan's spending on agricultural development overseas has held steady in recent years.

¶11. (SBU) Chang drew specific attention to Taiwan's increased funding for the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC) located in Tainan, and pointed to the key role improved vegetable production and technology can play in generating income for small-hold farmers and women, particularly in developing countries. She added AVRDC is seeking to add a new Central and South American branch station in Honduras.

YOUNG